



# PACIFIC CITIZEN



» **PAGE 6**

## 'Rooted IN COMMUNITY'

**JACL Embraces Little Tokyo as the Organization Seeks to Create Change.**



» **PAGE 4**

**Three Resolutions Passed During Business Session**

» **CENTER**  
**Special Photo Spread**

PHOTO: KRIS IKEJIRI





## A Successful Convention, But in Need of Your Help

By David Inoue,  
JACL Executive Director

When I was 16 years old, I got my first paid regular job working as a bagger at the local Kroger grocery store in Cincinnati. My father at the time worked in management at the headquarters, so it wasn't too hard getting the job.

Among the first things I learned about my new job was that I was now a Teamster. I started getting mail about attending meetings on the other side of town, but I never really thought much about it other than the union dues that were deducted from my paycheck every pay period, which honestly I wasn't too thrilled about. I actually asked my parents why I was paying union dues that consumed over an hour's worth of pay at my then nearly minimum-wage job.

My mother explained that the purpose of the union was not to help me, who didn't really need the job since I was living with my parents who earned our family's income, but for those who depended upon their jobs to support themselves, or perhaps even a family, with much-needed benefits such as health insurance, retirement and good sick and vacation leave.

It is for those fundamental needs that there are actually many strikes going on in Los Angeles, but in particular, the UNITE HERE Local 11 hotel workers fighting for pay increases to ensure their workers have a living wage. Additionally, the union is advocating for changes to housing policy to make housing more affordable in Los Angeles for its workers.

When staff first heard about the strikes over the Fourth of July weekend, we immediately mobilized to think through alternate sites but breathed a sigh of relief when we heard the strikes had been suspended after the weekend.

When we learned of rolling strikes and pickets the following week, we realized we had to make

a decision and engaged in dialogue with the union and our hotel. Ultimately, the uncertainty of whether a picket line might arise at our hotel led to JACL for the second time in its history moving our convention to another location at the last minute.

With our theme, "Rooted in Community," this ended up being a positive to our programming, though a nightmare for staff and local organizers. Ultimately, holding all of our major programming at the Japanese American National Museum, Japanese American Cultural and Community Center and the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in addition to the already scheduled opening reception at the Terasaki Budokan.

In addition to already catering the Sayonara Gala, local restaurant Azay came through with boxed lunches for the Friday NY/SC Awards luncheon. Sake Dojo provided the space and food for a reception far exceeding what we would have done at the hotel with the quality of food and beverages, though unfortunately, limited in attendance due to its smaller space.

Things may have been a little less convenient, losing the ease of taking an elevator from hotel rooms to meeting space a few floors down and instead depending upon hired shuttle buses and the local public transit system. I cannot say enough about the convenience of the DASH bus system, which for serving Little Tokyo, far exceeds the poor reputation of Los Angeles' public transit.

Ultimately, programming saw full or overflowing meeting spaces. We saw many people registering to attend sessions with day passes and sold out the Sayonara Gala. Many thanks to David Ono and Jeff McIntyre for putting on a sold-out performance of "Defining Courage" and adding a second show in the evening to meet community demand.

We are especially grateful to our sponsors, particularly State Farm at the Diamond level,

ATT at the Ruby level and AARP, Comcast, MGM Resorts International, the Umami Fund and Verizon at the Sapphire levels. Feedback from sponsors was incredibly supportive of both our decision to move convention due to the strike, but also especially appreciative of the deeper connection we found to the Little Tokyo community because of the changes.

There are so many other thanks that need to be given out. Tamlyn Tomita pulled together an amazing ensemble of women to perform a reading of "Question 27, Question 28," and she provided much of the support for both performances of "Defining Courage" and emceed the Sayonara Gala.

The Pacific Southwest District and Los Angeles-area chapters provided so much support led by District Governor Ryan Yoshikawa and especially Nancy Takayama, who truly led the local logistics for everything from planning the meals to securing the buses at the last minute to transport people between the hotel and Little Tokyo. And, of course, the hours of work put in by staff led by Cheyenne Cheng.

Moving convention was not without additional costs due to logistics such as the buses. We were able to reduce some expenses, but we had new expenses to add in. We are proud to have supported the Little Tokyo community and stand in solidarity with the UNITE HERE Local 11, but we could also use your support in defraying some of the added expenses of this year's convention.

Right now, we are looking at a likelihood of around a \$30,000 deficit. If you are able, your donation would be much appreciated to help us to ensure that standing by our principles is supported fully by our membership. Please make your donation now by going to our website (<https://jacl.org/donate>), where you can find information about sending in your check today, or follow the link to donate online.

Thank you in advance for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at the 2024 convention in Philadelphia!

*David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office.*

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The **Pacific Citizen** newspaper (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published semi-monthly (except once in December and January) by the Japanese American Citizens League, *Pacific Citizen*, 123 Ellison S. Onizuka St., Suite 206, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Periodical postage paid at L.A., CA.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to National JACL, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

**JACL President:** Larry Oda  
**Executive Director:** David Inoue

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Periodicals paid at Los Angeles, Calif. and mailing office.



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The P.C.'s mission is to 'educate on the past Japanese American experience and preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities.'

*\* Your donations will help build and preserve a cohesive library of the Pacific Citizen to educate future generations.\**

*'I'm glad to see the Pacific Citizen growing and evolving with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-to-navigate digital archives. It's a treasure trove for JAs to learn about our community's history, and for scholars and journalists looking to connect the past with the present. Thanks for the improvements, P.C.!'*

— Gil Asakawa



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# THIS CONVENTION WAS ONE FOR THE BOOKS!

By Cheyenne Cheng,  
JACL National Youth and  
Programs Manager

This convention was certainly one for the books! I first want to thank everyone who attended for their patience and understanding for all the shifts we had to make in less than a week. When we were asked to stand in solidarity with hospitality workers, it wasn't a matter of if but how.

We were alerted and updated on what was happening on the ground through local JACL staff, chapter members and union organizers, and we made the informed decision to leave host hotel the DoubleTree knowing what we stood for and that we would find a way to continue on through the support of the Little Tokyo community.

And support we did find, through JANM, JACCC, Azay and individual community members. In less than 30 hours, we had secured two hotels, finalized locations for all our special events and workshops, determined transportation options to get people to Little Tokyo and had not thoroughly

lost our minds (though the latter could be disputed!).

To put into perspective the convention in numbers, we had nearly 400 attendees between Wednesday and Saturday alone. Of those attendees, 203 participated in Ireicho at JANM. The first showing of "Defining Courage" on Sunday was sold out with a seated capacity of 880. We had 30+ virtual attendees watching our 89 speakers and performers throughout the week on Whova.

In addition to having two plenaries, we had 28 workshops and screened 21 films. What couldn't be counted were the many reunions that were had and the new connections that were made. A JACL National Convention in Little Tokyo was clearly overdue, and my hope is that we did it justice.

The work it took to bring this convention to life came from an extraordinary team of staff, committee members and volunteers. Convention has always taken up a significant amount of time for staff, and this year, we put in a lot more hours to adjust to all of the last-minute changes.



Lauren Matsumoto and Cheyenne Cheng at the JACL's Welcome Reception

PHOTO: KRIS IKEJIRI



The film series was largely due to Rob Buscher's oversight; we appreciated all of the film suggestions we were given and wished that we could have found space to screen all of them.

I also want to highlight PSW Governor Ryan Yoshikawa and PSW Vice Governor Nancy Takayama for their tireless dedication to seeing convention through. They were the first people to mobilize when we had to drastically change convention and were the last people out when the final event was over.

Without the hard work of every

single staff and volunteer, this convention would not have been able to pull all the events and programs off that we did.

Although we were able to successfully have convention in Little Tokyo, that doesn't mean we're out of the woods yet. Due to our canceled contract with the DoubleTree, we incurred fees that put the convention in the red.

Thanks to our community partners, the losses were not as significant as we feared, but any donations on your behalf would be greatly appreciated.

You can donate through our website (<https://jacl.org/donate>) or contact us by email ([mbr@jacl.org](mailto:mbr@jacl.org)) if you have any questions about supporting us.

Thank you all again for joining us in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, and we hope to see you in 2024 in Philadelphia!

*Cheyenne Cheng is the national youth and programs manager for JACL. She is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office.*



## A MOTHER'S TAKE

# LET THEM LEAD THE WAY

By Marsha Aizumi

As I began to write about my experience at the JACL National Convention, I remember thinking about the words of Whitney Houston . . . "I believe that children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the

way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier . . .

The young leaders who are rising through the JACL organization are no longer children, but they are our children who are making things happen. I see them as wise souls who are taking their personal experiences and using their voices to lift the level of dialogue about issues that are important to them, JACL and the broader community.

One group of young leaders organized a resolution on transgender and nonbinary equality with the help of Joshua Kaizuka — Tara Umemoto (Berkeley JACL), Vini Taguchi (Twin Cities JACL) and Michelle Huey (Florin JACL).

"The best part was working with younger colleagues who had great ideas, knew a lot more, were inspiring and thought that JACL should take a first step to lead, instead

of follow," said Kaizuka. What he was talking about was a transgender/nonbinary equality resolution that took on a call to action, so it was not just a statement of support, but it also talked about what JACL could do to move the needle forward.

Another place I saw young people taking the lead was a workshop that the NY/SC organized and asked Okaeri to be a part of. This workshop was brought together by KC Mukai and Cameron Sueoka and featured a discussion about "Queer Mental Health, Allyship & Activism."

We had over 40 people in attendance. The majority were young people, but also there in support were individuals like former Congressman Mike Honda, Naoko Fujii and Jim Oshima. Honda, who is the grandfather of a transgender child, came specifically to support these transgender discussions.

I was honored to be a part of this workshop because they wanted a parent's voice, so I became the moderator. The panel included Kyle Yasui and Remy Kageyama from NY/SC, plus Eric Arimoto and Aiden Aizumi from Okaeri. The panel talked about the difficulties in having intergenerational conversations, the stigma of mental health and how they find joy in a world targeting the LGBTQ+ community.

The presentation ended with what people can do to be better allies to LGBTQ+ individuals and their fam-

ilies. It was an emotional session.

KC Mukai shared that "being able to bring Okaeri and the NY/SC together affirmed how important safe spaces for conversation and partnerships with established organizations like Okaeri and JACL are." She also "walked away as an ally understanding how critical it is to bring intergenerational and diverse LGBTQ+ voices together, so perspectives from different lenses are present."

To keep this discussion going about transgender and nonbinary equality, 12 people will be meeting at the end of this month to discuss ideas on how to move actions into the future.

I know this is a hard thing for many of us to do, since we were raised not to stand out on controversial issues, such as LGBTQ+. That invisibility is part of the intergenerational trauma that exists in our community due to discrimination against the API community and incarceration in camps that so many families experienced.

But today's young people want to break out of this silence and raise their voices to affect change. It makes me feel so proud of their courage and determination.

I firmly believe that children are our future if we allow them to lead with their voices and ideas. For older individuals like myself, in order for this to happen, we need to listen to their thoughts and allow them to guide the discussion, believe in



Attendees of the JACL workshop were able to make touchstones, which reminded them of what they want to see more in themselves and the world.

PHOTO: MARSHA AIZUMI



"Queer Mental Health, Allyship & Activism" workshop participants included (kneeling, from left) Cameron Sueoka, Eric Arimoto and Aiden Aizumi and (standing, from left) Kyle Yasui, Remy Kageyama, Marsha Aizumi and KC Mukai.

PHOTO: KRIS IKEJIRI

their leadership, then step back to give them space to feel the pride in what they are creating.

I love how JACL is looking both to the past and focusing on the present to inform future needs and actions. And I love how the young people are stepping into the spotlight, often unsure, but not allowing their fear to quiet their voices. I am so grateful for the vision they hold for our community and the actions they are taking to make their visions a reality.

*Marsha Aizumi is an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and author of the book "Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance."*



(Right) JACL's National Board; (Below) JACL National Council delegates voted to approve three resolutions during the July 20 business session.

PHOTOS: KRIS IKEJIRI AND CINDY SIU



(From left) National President Larry Oda, Director of Finance Tom Fernandez and Executive Director David Inoue



# CREATING CHANGE

An inspirational week at JACL's National Convention reignites conversations about how to keep the nearly 100-year-old civil rights organization at the forefront of change in an ever-rapidly evolving landscape.

By P.C. Staff

"We need to remember where we're from, but we need to think about where we're going to go. What's in the future and what are we going to look like, what do we need to do?" asked JACL National President Larry Oda as he welcomed JACLers to the organization's annual National Convention on July 20 during the business session held at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. "We're going to use this time to educate you, to increase your knowledge because we need to be at the forefront of change."

By all indications, change is certainly a word with which JACL is familiar, having had to completely uproot set plans at the last moment due to a strike by Los Angeles area hotel workers, represented by UNITE HERE Local 11, that left the organization with the difficult decision to terminate its contract with host hotel the DoubleTree, rather than cross picket lines, and pivot completely.

In only a matter of hours, JACL

staff led by Executive Director David Inoue and Programs Manager Cheyenne Cheng, with the assistance of PSW leaders Ryan Yoshikawa and Nancy Takayama, were able to secure the Westin Bonaventure (which had an extant workers pact) for lodging and meeting space in addition to new shuttle buses and catering, as well as added venues at the Japanese American National Museum, JACCC and L.A. Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

Local support became vital to JACL and certainly reflected this year's theme, "Rooted in Community," and Susan Minato, co-president of UNITE HERE Local 11, also thanked JACL and the community for rallying around its striking workers, saying as she addressed the National Council, "Thank you for all that you're doing to stand in solidarity with our workers for fair wages."

But adhering to its civil rights principles came at a stiff cost to JACL. Termination of its agreed-upon contract with the DoubleTree amounted to a \$108,000 cancellation fee according to Inoue, who projected

during the organization's National Board meeting the previous day that this convention would result in a potential \$30,000 loss (for ways to help offset this deficit, see David Inoue's column in this issue).

"There is a force majeure in our contract about a strike and how that might impact things . . . now that they are picketing at the hotel. . . . I'm hoping we can perhaps get [the DoubleTree] to forgive some of that now that we do see that there is a strike going on," said Inoue. "We're also hoping to have some savings because of what JANM is providing to us and [the JACCC and Nishi Hongwanji] . . . by not having to do things at the hotel, which was obviously very expensive."

However, in spite of the projected revenue loss on convention, JACL Director of Finance Tom Fernandez presented positive gains in sev-

» See CHANGE on page 12



Convention sponsors are acknowledged; exhibitors welcome delegates at the Aratani Theatre.

## REMEMBERING Harry Honda

By Floyd Mori

The JACL National Convention just concluded in Los Angeles. It was a chance for JACL leaders and members to gather to discuss important issues for the organization, meet old friends and make new friends.

It used to be that Harry Honda would write a recap about the JACL National Convention every time it was held. He worked at the *Pacific Citizen* for the JACL for 50 years. The young people who attended the convention may not have heard of him. He is worth learning about. (see *Pacific Citizen*, July 14-27, 2023)

Harry was born in Los Angeles in 1919. He attended Maryknoll School in Little Tokyo and served in the Army during World War II while his family was incarcerated at the Rohwer, Ark., concentration camp.

He attended Loyola University after the war and graduated in 1950. Harry then spent 30 years as editor of the *P.C.* and subsequent years as general manager, editor emeritus and archivist. He died at age 93 in 2013.

It was always great to see Harry at JACL National Conventions and read his reports in the *P.C.* He and many of the other JACL old-timers who used to regularly attend the conventions are missed. Those who were in the younger generation have become the old-timers.

This 2023 convention was a challenge for the National JACL staff and National Board as a last-minute hotel change was needed. It was still possible to hold many of the convention events in Little Tokyo, thanks to the Japanese American National Museum and its National Democracy Center, as well as the Aratani Theatre and the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. The Nishi Hongwanji and local restaurants were also used.

Past JACL national presidents in attendance, including myself, were



Irene and Floyd Mori at the JACL National Convention's Welcome Reception at the Terasaki Budokan.

PHOTO: KRIS IKEJIRI

Ken Inouye, David Kawamoto, Jeffrey Moy, Larry Oda (current president), Frank Sato and Floyd Shimomura.

Former National Executive Directors John Tateishi and Ron Wakabayashi participated in plenary and workshop sessions as panelists. Other former JACL staff members attended and held a reunion.

Oda and Executive Director David Inoue, along with national board members and staff did a good job in carrying the convention through in an efficient manner.

The JACL continues to have relevance in today's world. The issues of civil rights and justice for all are ongoing concerns for diverse people. We must continue the fight to make a better world for those who come after us.

Although many of the old guard are gone, it was great to see so many of the student/youth and young professional generation step up to become active leaders in the JACL, both on the national level and on the local chapter level. We owe them our gratitude and support.

JACL National Conventions are fun and educational events to attend. Boosters are always welcome along with delegates and various leaders. It would be a good idea to plan now to attend the next convention in Philadelphia. ■



# UNFOLDING *History*

Two readings brought dramatic moments to the JACL National Convention.

By Gil Asakawa,  
Contributor

The JACL National Convention offered different ways for attendees to connect with history and culture, not just through the typical offerings of speeches and presentations. For one, there was a string of movies screened during the confab and two dramatic readings.

Acclaimed actor and community activist Tamlyn Tomita led a cast of young women on July 20 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center for a reading of “Question 27, Question 28,” a refreshingly different perspective on incarceration and the years afterward “curated” by playwright Chay Yew. Yew assembled actual quotes from oral histories provided by Japanese American women before, during and after World War II.

Tomita has been part of “Question 27, Question 28” since it first premiered in 2004 and has championed it ever since.



Actress-activist Tamlyn Tomita (far right) led an all-woman cast reading of “Question 27, Question 28.”

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA

“Shimbun” was led by (from left) writer-director Jeffrey Gee Chin and actors Keiko Agena and Chris Tashima.

The stories cover the shock of the attack on Pearl Harbor and JA families’ fear of what the future holds for them to the hardships of life in American concentration camps.

In an interview the week following the convention, Tomita said that the importance of this piece — which has always been a reading, never a staged production — is its atten-

tion to actual facts, captured in real time as history unfolded.

“And that’s, you know, critical race theory in action,” she said. “It’s looking at that chapter in history, specifically through another lens, and saying this is what happened.”

The reading was so powerful and

effective that it sparked a lively discussion with audience members afterwards, with many commenting that it deserves to be performed at every JACL National Convention and in theaters across the country.

Former JACL National President and Executive Director Floyd Mori

challenged the audience to raise the money necessary to bring it to every district within the organization.

The other dramatic reading during the convention was of a graphic novel, not a script, though “Shimbun” is on its way to becoming a full-length feature film. Writer-director Jeffrey Gee Chin is producing the graphic novel as a template for the film version.

And both are being built on the foundation of Chin’s well-received 2012 short feature “Li’l Tokyo Reporter,” based on a true story of crusading newspaperman Sei Fujii, who fought off gang activity in Little Tokyo in the 1930s.

“Reporter” starred award-winning actor Chris Tashima as Fujii and co-starred Keiko Agena, who some fans might know best from her role in “The Gilmore Girls” TV series from the early 2000s but also was featured in the crime drama “Prodigal Son.”

With Chin reading the narrator’s parts and Tashima and Agena reprising their roles from “Li’l Tokyo Reporter,” the threesome read a chapter from the novel and then held a Q & A with the audience assembled at JANM for the discussion.

Both sessions added a different way for JACL attendees to both learn about the community’s history and interact with some of the creative stars that shine within it. ■



## Answer Keiro's Community Survey!

Keiro 

Keiro is partnering with Vantage Research & Consulting, Inc. to conduct a community-wide, 10-15 minute online survey designed to assess the needs and preferences of Our Community. This survey will allow us to explore sustainable solutions to support the community’s older adults in the future.

Please answer the survey if you are...

- Part of the Japanese American and Japanese community AND
- Residing or have a close loved one in Los Angeles, Orange, or Ventura Counties

### How to Participate:

- 1 Submit your name and email address to [keiro.org/survey](https://keiro.org/survey) by August 31, 2023.
- 2 Look out for an email between August 1 and September 5 for the survey link. All surveys must be completed by September 15, 2023.

Contact **213.873.5700** or [survey@keiro.org](mailto:survey@keiro.org) before July 28, 2023 to request a mailed survey. Scan the QR code or visit [keiro.org/survey](https://keiro.org/survey). For questions, email [survey@keiro.org](mailto:survey@keiro.org).







PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA,  
ALLISON HARAMOTO,  
KRIS IKEJIRI, GEORGE T.  
JOHNSTON, SCOTT LEW,  
CINDY SIU

# 'ROOTED IN COMMUNITY'



The  
Terasaki  
Budokan



Los Angeles Mayor Karen  
Bass with JACL VP for  
Planning and Development  
Gary Nakamura

DTLA chapter's  
George Kita (left) with  
Philadelphia chapter's  
Gerald Kita



West Valley JACL's Pam  
Yoshida and NCWNP  
Gov. Carol Kawase.



Eden Kai



NY/SC's Lana Kobayashi  
(left) and Claire Inouye-  
Rasband



EDC Gov. Paul  
Uyehara and Mary Yee



(From left) Ryan Yoshi-  
kawa, Assemblyman Al  
Muratsuchi, Mitchell Matsu-  
mura and David Inoue



(From left) Assemblyman Al Mura-  
tsuchi, DTLA chapter's Kitty  
Sankey and P.C.'s George Johnston



Delicious spam  
musubi from  
Aloha Cafe



JACL Sapphire Pin  
recipients Nancy  
Okubo and George  
Tanaka (center) with  
(from left) David  
Inoue, Seia Watanabe  
and Ryan Yoshikawa



Staci  
Toji



L.A. Mayor Karen Bass  
(center) with JACL's NY/SC



(From left) Gil Asakawa, Georgette Furu-  
kawa, Rob Buscher and Kiyo Fukumoto



(From left) Setsy  
and Chip Larouche,  
Jose Fuentes and  
Phillip Ozaki



(From left) Erika Sato, Trisha Nakamura,  
Patty Wada and William Kaneko



USC Kazan Taiko

JACLers participate in numerous educational opportunities and events during the organization's annual convention in L.A.

## Welcome Reception

The Terasaki Budokan opened up its facilities to host JACLers at the organization's Welcome Reception on July 19 in an intimate gathering that featured Los Angeles VIPs, local musicians, delicious food offerings and, of course, the opportunity to convene again with old friends and meet new ones as well.

Held in the Skip and Aiko Kawaratani Plaza and sponsored by USC Dornsife, the USC Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture, event emcee Derek Mio introduced special guests Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi to begin the evening's festivities.

"This 53rd convention is really an incredible accomplishment to be here in Little Tokyo that has contributed so much to our city . . . and I look forward to continued work with all of you to make sure the work gets done. Anti-Asian hate is something that cannot be tolerated, and we're going to stand in solidarity with each other and always will," said Bass in speaking about just one of the many key issues the JACL works to educate others on and prevent.

Said Muratsuchi, "It's so great to be here. I feel like this is a homecoming reunion —

so many longtime friends as well as new ones. I want to join Mayor Bass and David Inoue and everyone with the national board of the JACL to welcome you to the beautiful city of Los Angeles."

JACL Executive Director David Inoue then awarded the organization's Sap-

phire Pins, given to those who have served 10 consecutive years of service to JACL at the district and/or national level, to Nancy Okubo and George Tanaka.

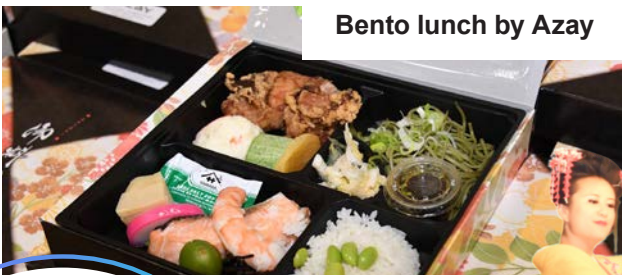
The evening also included performances by USC Kazan Taiko, a hula dance by Staci Toji and musical selections by ukulele/guitar virtuoso Eden Kai, in addition to fabulous food offerings from Little Tokyo's Aloha Café, Café Dulce, Millet Crepe and Ring Baked Tofu Donuts.

— P.C. Staff





Performance by Anju Madoka



Bento lunch by Azay

The 2023 Youth Luncheon featured a keynote address by Miyako Noguchi, presentation of the Vision Award to Nikkei Progressives, delicious bento lunch by Azay and performances by Anju Madoka and Sheera Tamura, as well as a traditional “Tanko Bushi” dance.

NY/SC Youth Luncheon



Members of JACL's NY/SC



JACLers participate in “Tanko Bushi.”

National Convention week saw a plethora of meetings, workshops, plenaries and special events in and around Little Tokyo. From the National Council business session meeting at the JACCC to workshops and plenaries at JANM to a NY/SC awards luncheon at Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, JACLers had plenty of offerings to take part in during their time in the City of Angels.



Pictured (front row, from left) are Zara Espinosa, Remy Kageyama and Naoko Fujii and (back row, from left) Mike Honda, Michelle Huey, Joshua Kaizuka and Vini Taguchi.



John Tobe



Members of Group A from 2023's Kakehashi program. Pictured (top row, from left) are Chaperone Bridget Keaveney, Scout Hayashi, Kristen Tang, Jeff Oki and Mary Marsh and (front row, from left) Hannah Rex, Ayako Tischler, Sachi Koide, Steffi Ando, Jen Doi and Scott Lew.



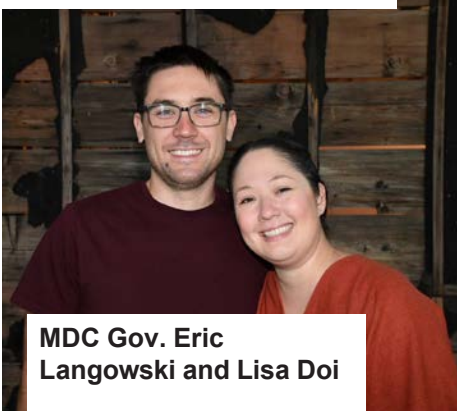
Mieko and Ron Kuramoto

Ron Wakabayashi

Candid Photos



(Front) George and Brad Takei and (from left) Mieko Kuramoto, Dominique Mashburn and RJ Webb



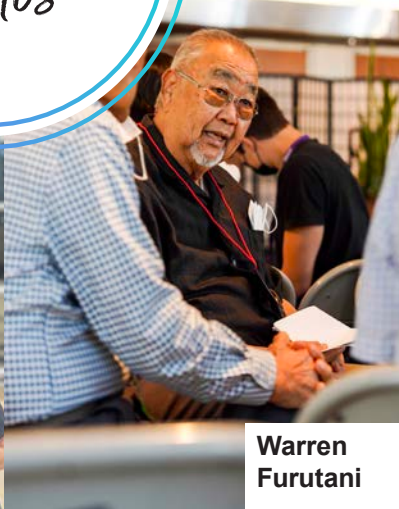
MDC Gov. Eric Langowski and Lisa Doi



(From left) Gil Asakawa and P.C. Editorial Board's Sheldon Arakaki, John Saito Jr., Ron Kuramoto and Rob Buscher



(From left) Mia Barnett, Carrie Morita and Marsha Aizumi



Warren Furutani



JACL National VP of Planning and Development Gary Nakamura makes his opening remarks during the plenary titled “Envisioning JACL’s Future Together” in the main hall of the Japanese American National Museum on July 21.



JACL National President Larry Oda (left) addresses the audience as panelists Lisa Doi, Sheldon Arakaki, Lisa Shiosaki Olsen, moderator Susan Kamei, Mika Chan and John Tateishi listen.



Michael Kanazawa shares a smile with the audience during his presentation.

# ONE SMALL STEP FOR JACL — AND A GIANT LEAP FOR ITS FUTURE?

Convention’s first of two plenaries plots course on adapting to a changing landscape.

By P.C. Staff

Future historians may note that the first step toward “Envisioning JACL’s Future Together” — which happened to also be the name of the July 21 plenary session at last month’s JACL National Convention in Los Angeles — took place at a different venue than what was listed in the printed convention guide.

The change, necessitated by a hotel workers strike and aided by a last-minute cancellation that freed up the main hall of the Japanese American National Museum, was a fitting example of how the Japanese American Citizens League must be flexible and adaptable as it figures out how to grow and remain relevant amidst membership declines, last year’s lack of interest by members to serve as national officers and ever-present fiscal challenges in the run-up to the organization’s centennial.

Serving as moderator for the discussion was Susan Kamei, former JACL national deputy legal counsel and member of the JACL’s legislative strategy team during the redress campaign and author of 2021’s “When Can We Go Back to America?: Voices of Japanese American Incarceration During WWII” (see *Pacific Citizen*, Sept. 10-23, 2021), who is also the managing director of the Spatial Sciences Institute at University of Southern California’s Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and professor of the USC course titled “War, Race and the Constitution.”

Preceding the Kamei-led discussion was an address by JACL National President Larry Oda, followed by remarks from JACL VP of Planning and Development Gary Nakamura of Houston and Michael Kanazawa, a member of California’s Contra Costa JACL chapter and partner for Innovation and Transformation at the accounting firm EY.

Alluding to the actions taken by both the Twin Cities JACL chapter in the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd and his Houston JACL chapter with regard to bills

aimed at barring real estate purchases by Chinese nationals and others, Nakamura told the audience: “The purpose of this new vision initiative is . . . to help JACL to continue to be relevant and thrive another 100 years.”

Up next was Kanazawa, who took the opportunity to share “a little bit about what visioning is all about.” Using slides in his address, he assured the audience that “visioning isn’t about anything radical, it’s just taking steps forward.”

Attributing to the Iroquois the concept of looking backward and forward seven generations before making an important decision, Kanazawa said, “The thing about visioning is this: If you get fixated on just the one thing that you’re concentrating on — for us that would be ‘What does JACL need to be in the future?’ — you kind of miss something about what the right answer is.”

Participating in the Kamei-led panel discussion were Sheldon Arakaki, Pacific Northwest District governor; Mika Chan, National Youth chair; Lisa Doi, Chicago JACL chapter president; Lisa Shiosaki Olsen, Intermountain District governor; and John Tateishi, former JACL national director and redress campaign strategist.

After answering a query about what JACL meant to each panelist, with answers ranging from serving and giving back to the community, Kamei followed with the question of whether the status quo for Japanese Americans and Asian American-Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islanders is better today than in the past?

“Things are much, much better today for Asians in this country than it was 20 years ago or even 15 years ago,” concluded Tateishi.

Kamei then polled the audience to respond with a show of hands to questions like: Will the future membership of JACL be A) much more diverse; B) somewhat more diverse; C) the same as today; or D) less diverse.

Addressing the panel, Kamei asked, “What is one group of people not in JACL or are not

often in JACL today who you think should be part of it in the future?” To that, Arakaki answered, “Center-right voices need a little more diversity on the spectrum,” and that the organization needed more “income diversity.” In a general sense, Chan added, “I would like to see the JACL become much more diverse.”

Kamei then addressed to Doi the question: “What would you imagine the JA-Asian American-Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islander experience to be and what do you hope for 20 and 30 years into the future?”

Doi answered that first, “JACL needs to be

very clear about what our values are” and that to be open to “a wide range of people,” JACL must offer “spaces for people to try things that don’t work out, try things and fail” — but still let members know that “they’re still welcome and held in community.” Chan added that she thought there was “a really big growth opportunity” for JACL.

Following Kamei’s discussion, Kanazawa added that the next steps for envisioning JACL’s future will be a “period of deep listening and not making decisions, not jumping to conclusions, just listening.” ■

## AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

### 2024 TOUR SCHEDULE

- HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVALS HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Feb 3-14  
Abashiri, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.  
Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival, Hyoto Winter Festival.
- JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Mar 17-29  
Tokyo, Shimoda, Shizuoka, Lake Kawaguchi, Kofu, Matsumoto, Kiso Valley, Narai, Tsumago, Nagoya.
- JAPAN HOLIDAY CRUISE** (Carol Hida) . . . . . Apr 10-27  
Tokyo, Yokohama, Maezaki, Kobe, Kochi, Fukuoka, Sokcho/So Korea, Kanazawa, Niigata, Otaru, Aomori, Hakodate, Yokohama. Holland American Line
- ICELAND HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . . . . Jun 5-11  
Reykjavik, Blue Lagoon, Strokkur Geyser, Gullfoss/Golden Falls, Thingvellir National Park, Viking Ship Museum.
- GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jun 16-26  
Tokyo, Hakone/Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences.
- EASTERN CANADIAN CAPITALS HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . . . . Sep 18-26  
Montreal, Via Rail Canada, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara Falls.
- CALIFORNIA DISCOVERY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . . . . Oct 9-15  
San Francisco, Sacramento, Train Ride, Lake Tahoe, Reno.
- KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Oct 11-24  
Seoul, Bullet Train, Gyeongju, Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Daejeon, Seoul, DMZ, K-Drama sites.
- JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Nov 10-22  
Kyushu-Shikoku. Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Ibusuki/Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Beppu, Matsuyama, Kochi, Shodo Island, Tokushima, Takamatsu.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

### AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

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Ernest or Carol Hida

Audience members raise their hands in answer to a poll question from moderator Susan Kamei.



# JACL BREATHES SIGH OF RELIEF AT SAYONARA GALA

Eventful convention makes smooth landing in Little Tokyo amidst turbulence.

By P.C. Staff



JACLers enjoy the entertainment at the Sayonara Gala.

Alan Nishi (center) accepts his Ruby Pin from Carol Kawamoto. Also pictured (from left) are Paul Uyehara, Travis Nishi, Carol Kawase and Sharon Ishii-Jordan.



JACL National President Larry Oda holds the Ralph Carr award while listening to former JACL National President Frank Sato speak about the role awardee Jack Svahn had in getting JACL's concerns about redress to the Reagan White House circa 1984.

PHOTOS: GEORGE T. JOHNSTON



Sayonara Gala Master of Ceremonies Tamlyn Tomita



JACL Executive Director David Inoue thanks Little Tokyo community institutions for helping with the JACL's National Convention when the organization had to change its venue because of the hotel workers strike.

After managing to avoid disaster when the JACL's National Convention had to change its main venue at almost the last minute, JACL staffers and conventiongoers had one last major hurdle to leap in Los Angeles before Sunday's two presentations of "Defining Courage," namely Saturday night's Sayonara Gala on July 22.

And, with the Writers Guild of America also striking, the convention still managed to ad lib its way to a Hollywood-style happy ending for an outdoor dinner on the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's plaza.

Nearby Hollywood managed to lend some grace and enthusiasm, courtesy of actress-activist Tamlyn Tomita playing the role of master of ceremonies. Following a flag ceremony by the Boy Scouts of Troop 764, based at the Venice Japanese Community Center, vocalist Helen Ota sang the "National Anthem" before the Taiko Center of Los Angeles treated the audience to some cloudless thunder.

Dinner was provided by the able staff of Chef Akira Hirose's Azay restaurant, with dessert made by Little Tokyo fixture Fugetsu-Do.

Dignitaries included former U.S. Rep. Mike Honda; Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles Kenko Sone; Brad and George Takei; past JACL Presidents Ken Inouye, David Kawamoto, Floyd Mori, Jeffrey Moy, Larry Oda (who is serving again in that capacity), Frank Sato (who would later come to the stage for a special presentation) and Floyd Shimomura; Mountain View City Councilmember Margaret Abe-Koga; and Alhambra City Councilmember Jeffrey Koji Maloney.

In an evening filled with special moments, one was the formal presentation of the Ruby Pin — the JACL's highest

service award for long-standing and significant individual contributions over a minimum of 20 years — prefaced by remarks from VP for General Operations Carol Kawamoto and presented with help from VP for Public Affairs Seia Watanabe.

The Ruby Pins went to Sharon Ishii-Jordan of the Midwest District, Carol Kawase and Alan Nishi, both of the Northern California-Western Nevada Pacific District, Travis Nishi of the Central California District and Paul Uyehara of the Eastern District.

When it was time for the evening's other awards, musical accompaniment came from Haruye Ioka, Keiko Kawashima and Helen Ota of the Grateful Crane Ensemble. The Ralph Carr Award went to John "Jack" Svahn, who served in the Reagan Administration as chief White House Domestic Affairs adviser.

On Aug. 10, 1984, Svahn held a crucial-to-redress meeting with JACL National Redress Committee Chair John Tateishi, Washington JACL Representative Ron Ikejiri, JACL National President Shimomura and Sato, the highest-ranking Japanese American in the Reagan administration, who was later elected JACL national president. Svahn met with the JACL members to hear their request for the White House to put redress on its radar. Thanks to Svahn, that indeed occurred four years later when President Ronald Reagan signed the Redress Bill.

Because of the sensitive nature of the meeting, however, Sato told his JACL compatriots that the meeting must be kept under wraps — and it was, until Svahn himself revealed its existence in his 2011 memoir "There Must Be a Pony in Here Somewhere" (see Aug. 19, 2019, *Pacific Citizen*).

Accepting the award in Svahn's absence was Sato. "I gratefully accept the Ralph Carr award for Jack and personally thank him for his unwavering support for redress. Jack could not be with us tonight. But he was there when we needed him the most," Sato said.

Characteristically, in a recorded video, Svahn downplayed his role and said Sato deserved "an awful lot of

the credit" and that the final passage and signing of the Redress Bill was a "real team effort from a lot of different people from a lot of different walks in life."

The Edison Uno Civil Rights Award went to attorney Don Tamaki. Most recently notable as the one Japanese American and sole non-African American serving on the California Reparations Task Force, he was also an attorney on the three coram nobis cases that revisited the World War II Supreme Court cases involving Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui. Tamaki was part of the team that revisited *Korematsu v. the United States*.

After acknowledging how much he admired the vision and audacity of Edison Uno — credited for formally initiating JACL's course of action on redress — Tamaki said, "I want to thank JACL members for passing resolutions both on the chapter level, and on the national level, supporting recreate reparations for African Americans."

The President's Lifetime Achievement Award went to Alan Nishio, who viewed the ceremony remotely while in hospice care, and scientist Dr. Syun-Ichi Akasofu, who spent years studying the aurora borealis phenomenon.

Executive Director David Inoue then said, "I want to thank our hosts tonight and for the past few days, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, the Japanese American National Museum and the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, who all really enabled us to hold our convention still rooted here in Little Tokyo, when we had to leave our Little Tokyo-based hotel. Staff and leadership of these institutions have really bent over backwards to ensure that our convention went off smoothly." He also thanked JACL staffers and volunteers like Nancy Takayama for all their efforts.

Following a video commemoration of community members who died in recent months, the 2023 signed off, with Philadelphia on deck for 2024. ■



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REIMAGINE  
EVERYTHING

## GRATEFUL FOR THE JACL SCHOLARSHIP AND JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION

By JR Fujita

I was honored to participate in my first JACL National Convention this past July, which was held in Little Tokyo. The experience inspired and allowed me to further understand all the sacrifices my late great-grandparents and late grandparents made, particularly during World War II.

I also discovered a deeper gratitude and appreciation for the JACL scholarship I received from the Sacramento chapter to attend California State University, Sacramento. Although unsure of my career path, I recognized my passion for leadership and advocacy during my involvement with my church's youth group, summer camp, leadership camps and service with various nonprofits.

When I found my first career job in grassroots advocacy, I discovered the importance of using my voice to instill change through public policies. I learned that calling and emailing my elected officials was necessary to make my opinion known.

Although policy change takes time, knowing I was part of the Democratic process was fulfilling. Sometimes it may take multiple legislative sessions for a proposal to pass and become law, so patience, persistence and repetition is crucial. I know not to assume that my elected officials will vote the way I want, and I make every effort to contact my elected

officials and advocate for policies I am passionate about.

At the National Convention, a variety of speakers reaffirmed the importance of our civic duty to speak up and create the change we want to see in our community.

If we do not act, then how can we expect change to come about? One example shared during the National Convention that resonated with me was the story of the JACL community coming together and taking action to preserve Japantowns across the nation. This collaborative effort is to preserve the rich history and public spaces that offer opportunities for our cultural connection and identity.

So, how can you start your advocacy journey today? Start by staying informed. Sign up for newsletters, follow elected officials on social media, sign up for advocacy alerts with organizations that represent issues you are passionate about.

At [aarp.org/advocacy](http://aarp.org/advocacy), you can sign up to become a mobile activist, e-activist, access policy studies and more.

In the words of AARP's founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, "If we are not content with things as they are, we must concern ourselves with things as they might become."

*JR Fujita is a senior state and community engagement specialist for AARP and is based in Sacramento, Calif.*

## KEIRO AND AARP SERVE UP CAREGIVING ADVICE OVER LUNCH

The discussion offers tips on providing the best possible care for a loved one and offers thought-provoking questions about the future.

By Gil Asakawa,  
Contributor

How would you raise a toast to an elder loved one who has died?

It's not exactly upbeat conversation fodder for a meal, but the crowd was engaged nonetheless during the Caregiving Café held during the JACL National Convention in Little Tokyo on July 20. The lunchtime session, held at the venerable Mitsuru Grill on First Street, was co-hosted by AARP, JACL and Keiro, the Los Angeles-based organization that provides services and programs for Japanese and Japanese American seniors.

The idea may seem gloomy, but Kevin Onishi, the chief operating officer of Keiro, kept the discussion light and respectful. He guided the audience members through a series of questions and table discussions about caring for family members and accepting their ultimate passing.

And accepting their own death, too. Onishi based the discussion on a book by Michael Hebb that he recommended the attendees read, "Let's Talk About Death (Over Dinner)." As lunches were served, he asked a series of questions sparked by how people would react if they found out they only had 30 days to live. One

of the questions he asked audience members to discuss was, "What would your last meal be?" Another was, "Where would you go?" and also, "Who would you spend your last days with?"

"Japanese food," "family" and "Japan" were, not surprisingly, among the more common answers. These questions got people to think about what elderly loved ones would consider valuable in their last days.

AARP for the past decade has dedicated a staff for outreach to the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Two AARP staffers, Scott Tanaka and JR Fujita, who contribute columns for the *Pacific Citizen*, were also on hand.

Onishi deftly managed the daunting task of cramming a much-longer presentation into a one-hour lunch-and-learn.

"There are so many reasons caregiving is important to our Japanese and Japanese American community because we have a tendency not to talk about our feelings with each other, right?" he said. The point of the lunchtime talk, Onishi, explained, was to get attendees to think about how they approach death and dying. "If we don't know how we would go about the grieving process, how are we going to know how to

Kevin Onishi, chief operating officer at Keiro, facilitated the conversation around the "Let's Talk About Death Over Dinner" model, where he asked participants lighthearted questions that then delved into more serious topics regarding aging and death.

have those conversations with our loved ones?" he said.

If we can't have those conversations with our loved ones, how are we going to be caregivers ourselves? Yes, this conversation sucks. It's scary. It is awkward. But it can start with not-so-scary questions like, "What's your favorite food?" "What food reminds you of your loved one?" And from there, you can go into more deeper questions: "Would you like end-of-life care?" "What about DNRs (do not resuscitate)?" "Physician-aided death?"

Some of the attendees had already had those conversations and asked their loved ones those difficult questions, which Onishi lauded. But most had not, so the conversation planted seeds that hopefully will sprout into fruitful conversations after the convention.

As Onishi pointed out at the end of the lunch, "The one thing is, aging is going to affect all of us, one way or another, whether you're 20 years old, whether you're 80 years old. Whether you have both of your parents, whether you don't have any children."

In the end, the sold-out presentation (which required RSVPs for the food order) left diners satisfied both physically and emotionally. ■

## Wildfires Burn Parts of Maui, Including Historic Tourist Town

By Associated Press

The search of the wildfire wreckage on the Hawaiian island of Maui on Aug. 10 revealed a wasteland of burned-out homes and obliterated communities as firefighters battled the stubborn blaze that has already claimed 36 lives, making it the deadliest in the U.S. in five years.

Fueled by a dry summer and strong winds from a passing

hurricane, the fire started Aug. 8 and took the island by surprise, racing through parched growth and neighborhoods in the historic town of Lahaina, a tourist destination that dates to the 1700s and is the biggest community on the island's west side.

Maui County said late Aug. 9 that at least 36 people had died; the Hawaii toll could rise, though, as rescuers reach parts of the island that had been unreachable due

to ongoing fires or obstructions. Officials said earlier Aug. 9 that 271 structures had been damaged or destroyed and that dozens of people had been injured, including some critically.

"We are still in life preservation mode. Search and rescue is still a primary concern," said Adam Weintraub, a spokesperson for Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. "What we have here is a natural disaster. There may have

been questions that need to be examined about whether it was handled in the right way. But we still got people in danger. We still have people who don't have homes. We still have people who can't find their loved ones."

The flames left some people with mere minutes to act and led some to flee into the ocean. Communications have been spotty on the island, with 911, landline and cellular service failing at times.

Gov. Josh Green cut short a trip and planned to return Aug. 9. In his absence, acting Gov. Sylvia Luke issued an emergency proclamation and urged tourists to stay away. President Joe Biden also declared a major disaster on Maui. ■

### HOW TO HELP MAUI FIRE VICTIMS

JACL Honolulu is mobilizing quickly to aid fire victims in Maui. To also help contribute immediately, donations can be made to the following:

The Maui Strong Fund was created by the Hawaii Community Foundation to provide community resilience with resources for disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The fund is currently being used to support communities affected by the wildfires on Maui.

To donate, visit <https://www.hawaii.communityfoundation.org/maui-strong>.

In addition, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement is matching a \$1 million goal in its fundraiser Kako'o Maui with additional support from Kamehameha Schools, Alaska Airlines and the King Charles Lunalilo Trust, among other organizations. Every dollar donated will be matched up to \$1 million.

To donate, visit <https://www.memberplanet.com/campaign/cnhamembers/kakoomaui>.



# In MEMORIAM

## Community Mourns Passing of 3 Wordsmiths

Poet Amy Uyematsu, journalists William Hiroto, Martha Nakagawa die.

By P.C. Staff

William T. Hiroto, Amy Uyematsu and Martha Miiko Nakagawa — three Japanese Americans known for their facility with different genres of the written word — have died recently.

A journalist, Hiroto — who was born in Riverside, Calif., and died in Los Angeles on June 23 at 94 — was known by his friends and readers by the nickname “Wimp” and “Wimpy.” During the latter years of his life, he contributed a column titled “Crossroads to Somewhere” to the *Rafu Shimpo*. His last column appeared in the paper’s June 16 issue.

Prior to serving in the Army, Hiroto was incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in Arizona during World War II. He later graduated from the University of Southern California with a journalism degree. In 2023, he was among of group of Japanese American military veterans who were recognized by USC for their military service.

During his stint as a *Rafu Shimpo* columnist, among the topics Hiroto wrote about was his journey from living independently to becoming a resident of the Keiro Retirement Home, later named Sakura Gardens, part of the re-named former Keiro facilities after its sale to Pacifica Cos.

Hiroto was predeceased by his wife, Margaret; and brother, Edwin Hiroto. He is survived by his sons, Russell (Jill) Hiroto and Jeffrey (Carol) Hiroto; brother, Donald (Betty) Hiroto; five grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.



An award-winning poet and Culver City, Calif., resident, Uyematsu died June 23 after battling cancer for two years. She was 75.

Uyematsu was born and raised in Southern California after her parents were released from incarceration at the Manzanar (California)



Uyematsu

and Gila River (Arizona) War Relocation Centers.

A Sansei, Uyematsu authored six poetry books: 1992’s “30 Miles from J-Town,” for which she won the Nicholas

Roerich Poetry Prize; 1997’s “Nights of Fire, Nights of Rain”; 2005’s “Stone Bow Prayer”; 2015’s “The Yellow Door”; 2016’s “Basic Vocabulary”; and 2022’s “That Blue Trickster

Time” (2022).

Prior to that, she authored a seminal essay titled “The Emergence of Yellow Power in America” that appeared in the newspaper *Gidra* in 1969 (see [tinyurl.com/3ua38jxh](https://tinyurl.com/3ua38jxh)). She also contributed to “Roots: An Asian American Reader,” a seminal textbook used in Asian American studies programs.

After graduating from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, she taught that subject for more than three decades in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Mary Uyematsu Kao reflected on her sister’s “superachiever” life. In an email to the *Pacific Citizen*, Kao wrote: “As years went by, her movement activism found a loving home in the poetry community. Her voice was uplifted, and a symbiotic love created the legacy she has left us with today — her six poetry books and the historic front-runner of Asian American texts — ‘Roots: An Asian American Reader.’

“‘Roots’ was used by Asian American students all over the country as the basis for starting Asian American Studies at their college campuses,” Kao continued. “‘Roots’ went through 19 printings. While Amy (Tachiki) shared co-editor status with Eddie Wong, Franklin Odo and Buck Wong, Amy was the driving force to see the project to completion as the UCLA Asian American Studies Center’s first publications coordinator.”

In 2012, the Friends of the Little Tokyo Branch Library honored Uyematsu for her contributions to the Japanese American community as a writer.

Uyematsu’s survivors include her husband, Raul Contreras; son, Chris Tachiki; mother, Elsie Umatsu Osajima; and sister, Mary Uyematsu Kao.



Nakagawa, 56, died on July 28 in Los Angeles less than two weeks after visiting the hospital for what she thought was a lingering stomach flu. She received the

diagnosis of cancer on July 16 — her birthday.

“She was in total shock. She did not see that coming at all,” said her childhood friend, Marie Morohoshi, regarding Nakagawa’s reaction to the medical results. She added that Nakagawa had a recent mammogram and at that time there were no early indications of cancer.



Nakagawa

PHOTO: MARIO REYES

Nakagawa’s journalism career included a five-year stint at *Pacific Citizen* (October 1998-June 2003) as assistant editor, as well as working on staff at *Asian Week* and *Rafu Shimpo*. She also contributed to *Hawaii Herald*, *Nikkei West*, *Nichi Bei Times* and *Hokubei Mainichi*. According to *Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board Chair John Saito Jr., Nakagawa also worked in the P.C.’s circulation department circa 1989.

Describing Nakagawa as “a great reporter, hard-working and very productive,” Colorado-based Gil Asakawa, who served as the *Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board chair during a period that overlapped with her stint with the paper, he said, “My recollection is that she was a good, diligent journalist whose voice was important to the P.C., and I enjoyed her stuff in all the other publications.”

Nakagawa was a graduate of Gardena High School and Stanford University and was the only child of Shigako Nakagawa, a Shin Issei, and Akio “Lawrence” Nakagawa, a Kibei Nisei born in the Sacramento Delta region of California.

Author and novelist Naomi Hirahara, when she was editor of *Rafu Shimpo*, hired Nakagawa in the 1990s before her stint at the *Pacific Citizen*. “There was an opportunity to hire someone, and that’s when I hired Martha because

she was fully bilingual,” she said.

For Nakagawa, writing about and reporting on marginalized, overlooked, underserved, unpopular, unrecognized and disenfranchised individuals and communities within the larger Japanese American community was a constant theme for her interest in journalism.

There were times, however, when Nakagawa’s pursuit of those stories did not endear her to some within the JA community. In a 2021 video interview conducted by *Nichi Bei Weekly* Editor-in-Chief Kenji Taguma of another Nikkei community journalist, Takeshi Nakayama, and Nakagawa, she recalled the flak she encountered regarding some of the articles she wrote.

“When I started writing about the draft resisters at the *Pacific Citizen*, I started getting phone calls and office visits from JACL members who were staunchly against apologizing to the draft resisters,” Nakagawa recalled in the video.

Frank Abe, himself a journalist, documentarian, graphic novel writer and cultural critic, told the *Pacific Citizen*, “I still can’t believe she’s gone.” Though “devastated” by her death and the loss of her “encouragement, support and the loss of all the work that she still had ahead of her,” he took some solace that “her work will be long remembered.”

Writer Barbara Takei, an officer of the nonprofit Tule Lake Committee, described Nakagawa as “very gutsy” and “courageous” for “using her skills and her talent to tell the stories” of resisters and others.

Nakagawa was predeceased by her parents and is survived by her friends, life partners and many relatives in Japan.

At 11 a.m. on Aug. 27, a celebration of life service for Nakagawa is scheduled to take place at Fukui Mortuary, 707 E. Temple St., Los Angeles, with a reception to follow.

## Portland, Ore.’s Homer Yasui Has Died

Hood River, Ore.-born Homer Yasui of Portland, Ore., died July 25. He was 98. A Nisei, Yasui was the eighth of nine children born to Issei immigrants Shidzuyo and Masuo Yasui. He was an active JACLer and a member of the Portland JACL Chapter.

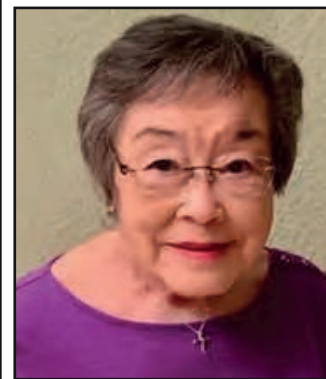
He was predeceased by his wife,

Miki; his son, Allen; and his siblings. He is survived by his daughters, Barbara and Meredith, and son, John, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

(Editor’s Note: A longer story about Homer Yasui will appear in a future issue of the *Pacific Citizen*.)

### TRIBUTE

#### ADA HONDA



Ada Honda, age 102, passed away peacefully surrounded by her three daughters on May 16, 2023, at Provident Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Wash. She was born on Nov. 13, 1920, to Kimiji Ichikawa and Chika Mizuhara in Walla Walla, Wash.

Ada was the youngest of three; her siblings were Tom and Mary. She graduated from Walla Walla High School in 1938, wanting to go to nursing school but her application

was denied due to her race. Instead, she worked as an optical technician for Riggs Optical Co. in Walla Walla and later worked in the Yamauchi family restaurant in Pasco, Wash., during World War II.

On June 17, 1947, Ada married Harry Yoshiteru Honda from Yakima, Wash., and they moved to Spokane. Together they raised Marcia, Rhona, and Karla. After the girls grew older she worked for Spokane District 81 from 1964-1985. Her gift was working with young children with special needs. She worked at the Cerebral Palsy School, Garland Elementary School for the Neurological and Orthopedically Handicapped, and at Linwood Elementary School for the Hearing Impaired in the Oral Program.

In 1984-85 Ada was honored by educators and district personnel as the staffer of the year. In 1985, she retired so she could spend more time with her husband and grandchildren. After celebrating their 54th anniversary, Harry passed away in 2001. As a member of Highland Park United Methodist Church, Ada was the Community Care and Social chairman. She actively expressed her love and concern for others by visiting homes and hospitals, making phone calls, and later, texting her family and friends. She was also involved in the Volunteers of America Crosswalk program and the Spokane Chapter Japanese American Citizen League.

Ada’s bright beautiful smile, loving eyes and “unbelievable” memory will be forever missed, especially by her three daughters, seven grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, extended family and friends.

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**CHANGE» continued from page 4**

eral areas for JACL in his report that reflected numbers as of May 2023. Among the highlights were a \$249,000 bequest for the Centennial Fund, \$27,000 bequest for general support, a \$129,356 PPP loan for-giveness received in 2022 and P.C. is \$2,500 over 2022's YTD total, all of which have helped get the year off to a good start.

"Although investment income did have a drop, we had a significant increase in general support due to bequests that came through. It was a big uptick, 5,000 percent in comparison to the previous year," he said. "Things are looking positive for 2023."

Among other orders of business, JACL's National Council, represented by 72 chapters that were present, passed three resolutions, all in sup-

port of marginalized communities.

In a statement by JACL National, "Resolution One broadens JACL's support of the LGBTQIA+ community, focusing specifically on transgender and nonbinary folks, by creating new programs to help teach the JACL community about transgender and sexual identity while also seeking to make JACL National functions more inclusive for all; Resolution 2 was presented in response to the growing number of discriminatory laws targeting Asian immigrant communities from owning land, calling on JACL to combat and publicly denounce any and all 'Alien Land Laws' that are introduced or passed across the country; and Resolution 3 reaffirms JACL's support for reparations efforts for



**JACL National Staff and two Nikkei Community Interns gathered for a photo at JANM during a brief break in workshops and plenary sessions on July 21.**

PHOTO: KRIS IKEJIRI

African American communities nationwide."

JACL also awarded five Ruby Pins, the organization's highest service award, to Sharon Ishii-Jordan, Carol Kawase, Alan Nishi, Travis Nishi and Paul Uyehara, each of whom offered their thanks and appreciation to the organization that has given so much to them in return.

"I was born and raised in the JACL,"

said Ishii-Jordan. "I really appreciate the work in JACL that our leaders are doing and being part of the leadership group at different points in time but especially working with the Education Committee and the teacher training workshops. That's where my heart is."

Next to speak was Kawase, who also serves as NCWNP governor: "Today's leaders need to speak up and speak, as JACL's work will never be done. . . . My single passion has always been to keep our incarceration experience stories alive, and I hope we all continue to inspire each other to continue the important work of civil rights for all."

Agreeing with that sentiment, Travis Nishi said, "I have thoroughly enjoyed the experiences that JACL has brought to my life . . . and I encourage each and every one of you to maintain an active role in the

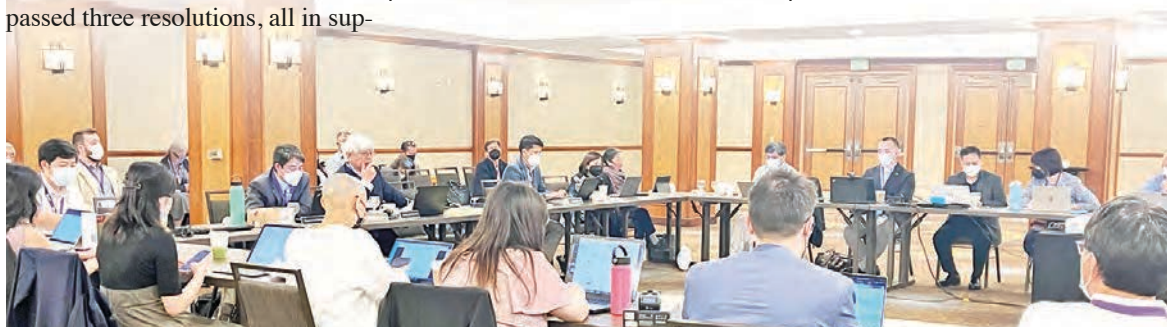
organization and never forget to look back and, as Larry (Oda) has said before, we stand on the shoulders and in the shadows of those who came before us."

"JACL has always been my home organization because it's a comfortable place. . . . This is a place where I feel my voice can be heard," said current EDC Governor Uyehara.

And said a thoroughly surprised Alan Nishi, "It's an honor to be recognized like this, especially with my peers that I have worked with and known throughout my JACL involvement. It's really an honor."

The National Board also shored up several positions. Claire Inouye-Rasband was confirmed as the new NY/SC Youth Rep. and Jonathan Okamoto was unanimously confirmed as secretary/treasurer.

Lastly, in discussing new business, Inoue announced to all in attendance that the 2024 National Convention would be held in Philadelphia. ■



**The JACL National Board held its quarterly board meeting on July 19 at the Westin Bonaventure in downtown Los Angeles, having secured the meeting space just days before.**



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